

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE SPECIFICATION
PRESCRIBED BURNING**

**(ACRE)
CODE 338**

Livestock grazing on areas to be burned will be managed to ensure that forage plants are in a high state of vigor and that they will provide adequate fuel to carry the fire with continuity. When brush suppression is the objective, the fuels shall be evenly distributed to carry the fire. Deferment may be necessary prior to the burn to obtain desired fine fuel amounts.

It is the landowners responsibility to obtain a permit for "Open Burning" from the Environmental Improvement Division of New Mexico Department of natural Resources, and to comply with all local and county ordinances. On State Land a copy of the burn plan is to be submitted with the application for improvement.

It is the landowners responsibility to notify all neighbors, fire departments, sheriff departments, utility companies, oil companies, etc. prior to the burn.

Get a 24-hour outlook for weather conditions from the fire weather focal point of the National Weather Service. (The N.W.S. number is Albuquerque, NM is (505)244-9148) or U.S. Fire Weather Forecast on the Internet at <http://fire.boi.noaa.gov/>

Where natural barriers (lakes, streams, wetlands, or roads) do not exist constructed firelines and blacklines will be used to control burns. They are to be installed prior to the burn.

Firelines are to be bladed, dozed, disked, etc., down to mineral soil and minimum of 10 feet wide. When grading firelines, rolls of soil and vegetation material will be left on the side of the fireline opposite the fire.

Follow manufacturer's label when fire retardants are used to build blacklines.

Blacklines will be 100 feet or more wide for low-volatile fuels. (grasses, shrubs, and green trees)

Blacklines will be 500 feet or more wide for high-volatile fuels. (juniper)

When blackline burning or burning high fuel areas, day time temperature should not exceed 70 degrees Fahrenheit, wind speeds should not exceed 6 mph. nor be less than 3 mph., and the relative humidity should not be less than 30%.

Dispose of (burn or remove) any brush piles or highly combustible material in the area to be burned to reduce hazards of firebrands. Check all firelines for "fuel bridging" on areas not cleared to mineral soil.

The fire boss must:

1. Review the burn plan with the burn fire crew prior to the burn.
2. Conduct a test fire prior to the burn to determine if the fire is going to accomplish the objective in a safe manner.
3. Be in charge of the burn at all times. Continually assess the progress of the burn, make needed adjustments, keep the fire crew informed of decisions, progress, and changes made during the fire.
4. Be highly mobile.
5. Monitor firelines continuously.

One person on the burn crew will be designated as the fire weather person.

This person will continuously monitor weather factors affecting the fire - wind direction and velocity, relative humidity and air temperature during the course of the fire. No more fire should be burning at one time than can be controlled by equipment and crew.

To avoid the risk of firewhirls do not burn a headfire into a backfire (unless emergency situations or change in wind direction make it necessary).

When conducting a main headfire burn the maximum daytime temperature shall not exceed 80 degrees Fahrenheit, wind speed shall not exceed 20 mph. nor be less than 3 mph., and the relative humidity shall not be less than 10%.

Do not burn:

- log littered areas if the weather forecast is for strong winds within 3 days after the burn.
- when a weather front is expected during the burn, or winds are light and variable.
- when air temperature exceeds 80 degrees F.
- when wind velocities exceed 20 mph.
- relative humidity is less than 10 percent.

For specific purposes and conditions for burning see attachment 1. (Conditions for Burning and Frequency of Burning)

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

The fire boss must maintain close observation of the burn area until the fire is extinguished. Stumps and dry manure may smolder for several days after the burn. Be especially careful with burning material that is within 50 feet of the perimeter of the burn area.

Prescribed burning can be physically strenuous. All crewmembers should be in

good physical condition to enable them to perform all necessary assigned tasks.

All fire fighting equipment should be tested prior to starting a fire.

REFERENCES

H. A. Wright and A. W. Bailey, Fire Ecology. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, NY 1982.

G. McPherson, Allen Rasmussen, Henry A. Wright and Carlton M. Britton, Getting Started in Prescribed Burning, Management Note 9, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX, 1986.

G. Allen Rasmussen, Guy R. McPherson and Henry A. Wright, Prescribed Burning Juniper Communities in Texas, Management Note 10, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX, 1986.

Carlton M. Britton, Henry A. Wright, Bill E. Dahl, and Darrell N. Ueckert, Management of Tobosagrass Rangeland with Prescribed Fire, Management Note 12, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX, 1987.

New Mexico State Forestry, Guidelines for Prescribed Fire in New Mexico, January 1992.

Attachment

CONDITIONS FOR BURNING AND FREQUENCY OF BURNING

VEGETATIVE TYPE AND SPECIFIC PURPOSE	SEASON		WIND VELOCITY		RELATIVE HUMIDITY		AIR TEMP. °F	FREQUENCY OF BURNING
	Optimum	Max. Range	Optimum	Max. Range	Optimum	Max. Range		
I) CONTROL OF UNDESIRABLE PLANTS	*1/	*2/						
Sprout and seedlings of juniper, mesquite, prickly-pear, and cacti; brown snakeweed, sagebrush;	3/1 4/1	2/15 5/1 *3/	8-15 mph	8-20 mph	20-30	10-50	70-80	As Needed
II) IMPROVE QUALITY OF FORAGE FOR LIVESTOCK								
(a) Tobosa, sacaton	3/15 4/15	2/15 5/1	6-10 mph	6-15 mph	30-50	25-60	45-60	10 yrs. on Uplands 7 yrs. on Lowlands
(b) Weeping lovegrass	3/1 4/1	2/1 4/15	6-10 mph	6-15 mph	30-50	25-60	45-60	6 yrs.
III) IMPROVE QUALITY OF FORAGE FOR WILDLIFE								
Improve availability and quality of browse	3/1 4/1	2/15 4/15	8-12 mph	8-20 mph	25-40	20-40	70-80	As Needed

*1/Immediately prior to initial green up of the herbaceous forage plant being managed.

*2/ Areas that landowners or operators manage for specific bird habitat should not be burned during the nesting seasons.

*3/ On broom snakeweed and big sagebrush a mid to late June burn may be advantageous. These areas and times will be closely evaluated on a case-by-case basis.